RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYANDARUA AND LAIKIPIA DISTRICTS, KENYA

J. K. KIUMI, J. BOSIRE AND A. K. SANG

ABSTRACT

Students' discipline is critical to the attainment of positive school outcomes. Level of students' discipline depends on whether the principal- as the chief executive of the school- enlists the support of teachers and parents in discipline management. The study hypothesized that an inclusive discipline management approach is more likely to increase teachers' and parental input on discipline management. This may in turn raise the level of discipline. The study investigated and analysed the relationship between principals' management approaches and level of students' discipline in selected public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Laikipia districts, Kenya. Analysis of the relationship was based on school- size. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire from a sample of 211 teachers, 28 principals and 22 chairpersons of parent- teachers association. Data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages and hypotheses tested using chi- square at 0.05 level of significance. The key findings revealed that principals heading large-sized schools were more inclusive compared to their counterparts in small schools. In addition, level of teachers' and parental input on discipline management increased with increase in school-size. However, the level of students' discipline was negatively related with school-size. These findings have important implications on school management with respect to training of principals and enhancing students' discipline.

KEY WORDS: Principal; Management approach; Students' discipline

INTRODUCTION

Kenya's education has had phenomenal growth at all levels since 1963. At the secondary level for instance, enrolment rose from 30,000 in 1963 to 632,000 in 1995 representing a 2000% increase in about three decades (Republic of Kenya, 1997). By 2006, total enrolment in this sub sector had increased to 1,03,080 (Republic of Kenya, 2007).Expansion of secondary education is premised on the belief that it is at this point where learners are prepared to make a positive contribution to the development of the society (Republic of Kenya, 1976). This has the implication that secondary school curriculum should be effectively implemented so that learners may reach their full potential. However, it is instructive to note that a school's learning outcomes is dependent on the quality of students' discipline (Reynolds, 1976). This is because, discipline *inta alia* provides a sense of direction among learners besides increasing teachers' job satisfaction, which is a critical correlate of commitment to school goals (Imber and Neidt, 1990).

In spite of the crucial role that disciplined behaviour plays in the overall school outcomes, the condition of students' discipline in Kenya's secondary schools has been disheartening. This is because, hardly a school term goes by without incidence of violent behaviour being reported in the mass media. This form of behaviour has more often than not led to unfortunate incidences such as destruction of school property, assault,

J. K. Kiumi, Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Egerton University, Laikipia Campus College, Box 1100-20300 Nyahururu, Kenya.

J. Bosire, Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Egerton University, Laikipia Campus College, Box 1100-20300 Nyahururu, Kenya.

A. K. Sang, Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Egerton University, Laikipia Campus College, Box 1100-20300 Nyahururu, Kenya.

and indecent behaviour such rape and in extreme cases death of students (Republic of Kenya, 1991; Republic of Kenya, 2001). Such incidents tend to impact negatively on the gains made so far at this level of education. In view of the rising trend in students' indiscipline, the government set two task forces(Republic of Kenya, 1991; Republic of Kenya, 2001) whose terms of reference was to establish the causes of indiscipline in these institutions and ways of addressing the problem. In spite of the numerous recommendations put forward by the two task forces the problem of indiscipline is still persistent. This is not a far- fetched observation if it is realized that while 7% of secondary schools in the country experienced mass indiscipline in 1974(Kinyanjui, 1976), the figure had risen to 10% between 1986 and 1991 (Nasibi, 2003).

The generally documented causes of students' indiscipline in Kenya include drug abuse by students, poor parenting, and negative influence by the mass media, and politics (Kariuki, 2000; Mandi, 2001; Warigi, 2001; Republic of Kenya, 2001; Ruto- Korir, 2003). It is worthwhile to note that cases of indiscipline (in particular unrest) in Kenya's secondary schools tends to vary markedly between schools with comparable locality and both the entry behaviour and social background of students they admit from primary schools. This scenario suggests that secondary schools could be having an influence (either positively or negatively) on the behavioural development of pupils they select from primary schools. The foregoing has the implication that, comparatively in school factors could be having an appreciable influence on students' behaviour. For this reason, it would be a gross simplification to entirely attribute indiscipline problems in Kenya's secondary schools to out-of school factors. Young (1985) has indeed cautioned that we should guard against the belief that learners' academic and social development is influenced solely by non-school factors lest it becomes a self- fulfilling prophesy.

One of the most significant in- school factor that influences students' discipline is the schools social environment or organizational climate for that matter (McManus, 1989; Reynolds, 1989). This refers to the way members of the school community relate and interact with each other. If the climate is favourable, the members are likely to increase their level of interaction and consequently enhance the school's learning outcomes. The reverse is applicable. Members of a social organization, it needs to be noted do not act in a social vacuum. On the contrary, their actions are integrally related to the organization's managerial policies (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001). This implies that the extent to which members of the school community will direct their efforts to the laid down goals depends on the kind of organizational climate created by the principal. This is because; the principal is the schools' chief executive (Mbiti, 1982). In this regard, if he/she applies a democratic/ inclusive approach, teachers and parents are likely to play a proactive role in nurturing learners' behaviour towards the desired direction and vice versa. (Pollard, 1982; Kiumi, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Literature on organizational leadership shows that different leaders adopt different approaches to accomplish organizational goals. Lue and Byars (1993) have observed that a leaders' attitude towards his/her co-workers has a bearing on the approach (whether inclusive or inclusive of co-workers) he/she applies to attain the stipulated organizational goals. If the leaders' altitude is favourable, he/she is likely to apply an inclusive approach and vice versa.

The relationship between a leaders' attitude towards fellow workers- and hence his/her willingness to involve them in organizational affairs is expounded in McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Y assumptions about human motivation. McGregor has posited that Theory X leaders view their co-workers as lazy, self-centred, work avoidant, and indifferent to organizational goals. For this reason, such leaders distrust their co-workers thereby tightly controlling organizational activities. Consequently, their co-workers have limited opportunities to participate in organizational decision making process. In the context of school management, principals subscribing to Theory X are those who hold a negative attitude towards other members of the community. For instance, they may have the belief that teachers and parents have little interest in the schools socio-academic life. For this reason, this category of principals will rarely enlist the support of teachers and parents in their effort to enhance discipline. This may impact negatively on the behavioural development of learners.

Theory Y by contrast is grounded on a human relations leadership approach for it exhibits a positive orientation towards members of an organization. The basic tenet of this theory is that organizational members are honest,

industrious, responsible and always willing to take initiative to better the organization. Leaders espousing Theory Y attitude towards fellow workers are, therefore, more inclined to delegate authority, share responsibility and enable co-workers participate in making various organizational decisions (Copland, 2003).

Theory Y orientation towards co-workers is typical of principals who hold the view that teachers and parents are crucial allies in realizing the desired school goals. Such principals are, therefore, more likely to bring teachers and parents on board during the formulation and implementation of students' discipline policies. In such a school environment, teachers and parents are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to play their role expectations in discipline management. This may in turn stem and nurture negative behaviour and societal values among learners respectively.

Statement of the Problem

The success of teaching- learning process is dependent upon the quality of students' discipline. Since students' discipline management is a corporate responsibility between teachers and parents, the school principal is expected to incorporate the two categories of members of school community in his/her school's discipline management programme. This has the implication that the principal should embrace a favourable altitude towards teachers and parents. Studies, specifically Galloway, Mortmore and Tutt (1989), and Mungai (2001) have shown that one of the factors that may determine the nature of principal's attitude towards teachers and parents and hence his/her level of inclusiveness in school management is size of school. However, although the studies have shown that there is a relationship between principals' willingness to include other stakeholders in school management programmes and size of school, there is paucity of research in Kenya on the extent to which principal's level of inclusiveness in discipline management may be related to size of school. This study was, therefore carried out to fill this gap with a view to generating information that could enable principals to provide productive leadership in discipline managements.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The overall purpose of the study was to investigate whether there was any relationship between principal's discipline management approaches and level of students' discipline. In order to accomplish this investigation, size of school was used as the basis of analysis. In this regard, the investigation was carried out at three levels:

1. Relationship between size of school and principals' discipline management approaches.
2. Relationship between size of school and teachers and parental input on discipline management. This level of investigation aimed at determining indirectly whether principals' discipline management approaches had any effect on teachers and parent input on discipline management.
3. Relationship between size of school and level of students' discipline. This level of investigation aimed at establishing indirectly whether teachers and parental input had any effect on students' discipline. Similarly, this level of investigation was expected to generate information that would help to determine indirectly whether there was any relationship between principals' approaches to discipline management and level of students' discipline.

The study addressed itself to the following objectives:

1. To find out whether there was any relationship between size of school and principals' discipline management approaches.
2. To establish whether there was any relationship between size of school and teachers and parental input on discipline management.
3. To determine whether there was any relationship between size of school and level of students' discipline.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were development and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no statistically significant relationship between size of school and principals' discipline management approaches.

Ho_2: There is no statistically significant relationship between size of school and teachers and parental input on students' discipline.

Ho_3: There is no statistically significant relationship between size of school and level of students' discipline

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the survey research design. This is a type of design whereby the researcher gathers data from a large number of people on their behaviours, attitudes and opinions (Marczyk, Dematteo and Festinger (2005).

Data for the study were collected from 261 respondents who comprised of 211 teachers, 28 principals and 22 chairpersons of the schools' parents' and Teachers' Association (PTA) from Laikipia and Nyandarua Districts, Kenya This represented 72% of the selected sample size of 362 respondents, initially determined using a sampling fraction of 20% of the total (N=1537) Population (Krencie and Morgan, 1970).Three sets of questionnaires were self administered to principals, teachers and PTA chairpersons. The questionnaire for principals gathered data on gender, headship experience and size of school. The questionnaire for teachers had four sections labelled A, B, C, and D while that of the PTA chairpersons had three sections labelled A, B, and C.

Section A in the teachers' questionnaire and the one for PTA chairpersons elicited data on gender, and age. Section B in each of the two questionnaires had 13 five-point likert scale items. The items gathered data on the degree of principals' inclusiveness of other parties (teachers and parents) in the management of students' discipline. This constituted Principals Discipline Management (DMA) index which ranged from a possible minimum of 13 points to a possible maximum of 65 points. On the other hand, section C in each of the two questionnaires had 20 five-point likert scale items. The items gathered data on teachers and PTA chairpersons' perception of the extent to which fellow teachers and parents respectively played their role expectation in discipline management. Data from the 20 items constituted Teachers' and Parents' input (TPI) index on discipline management. The index ranged from a possible minimum of 20 points to a possible maximum of 100 points. Teachers' questionnaire had an additional section D which had 26 items that measured students' discipline on a five-point likert scale. The 26 items generated Level of Students' Discipline (LSD) index which ranged from a possible minimum of 26 points to a possible maximum of 130 points.

The scores in the three indices were grouped into four quotas respectively as very low, moderately low, moderately high and very high as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Perception Scores by Perception Types

Perception Type	Very Low	Moderately Low	Moderately High	Very High
DMA	13-26	27-39	40-52	53-65
TPI	20-40	41-60	61-80	81-100
LSD	26-52	53-78	79-104	105-130

Key: **DMA** - Discipline Management Approach
TPI - Teachers' and Parental Input
LSD - Level of Students' Discipline

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

One of the major problems in social science research is the measurement of human behavioural attributes with accuracy, Yet, it is a vital component in scientific research (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). In this regard, efforts were made to ensure that the instruments were not only valid but also reliable. The former was accomplished through an extensive literature review on school management, especially students' discipline management in order to identify the relevant content areas and thus indicators of students' discipline management that were to be focused by the instruments. In addition, utmost care was taken to ensure that the items were prepared according to the objectives of the study. Furthermore, the instruments were piloted in three schools with a view to ensure that they were accurate, relevant and clear. Items that were either unclear or open to misinterpretation were rephrased accordingly.

A reliability analysis on the items yielded a coefficient value of 0.82 using Spearman – Brown Prophesy formula (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). According to this formula a reliability coefficient close to 1.00 is regarded as adequate. Since the items gave a coefficient of 0.82, they were regarded as reliable in collecting

the data required for this study (Marcysk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005). Data extracted from the questionnaires were analysed through frequency counts and percentages and hypotheses tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data on responds' sex and age (in years) were analysed and subsequently summarized in Tables 2 and 3.

Sex Distribution

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Principals	Class teachers	PTA Chairs	Total
Male	22(79)	149(70)	20(91)	189(72)
Female	6(21)	64(30)	2 (9)	72(28)
Total	**28(100)**	**211(100)**	**22(100)**	**261(100)**

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)

Table 2 shows that male respondents were the majority in all categories of respondents, implying that there was no gender parity in the general distribution of administrative responsibilities in secondary school management in the two districts. This is consistent with Gachoki's (2006) study in Nyandarua District which showed that women principals in her study sample were underrepresented by a ratio of 8:1.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (in years)	Principals	Class teachers	PTA Chairs	Total
25-30	-	34(16)	-	34(13)
31-35	-	57(27)	1(4)	58(22)
36-40	12(43)	72(34)	3(14)	87(33)
41-45	5(18)	32(15)	3(14)	40(16)
46-50	8(28)	8(14)	8(36)	24(9)
51-55	3(11)	8(4)	3(14)	14(5)
56-60	-	-	4(18)	4(2)
Total	**28(100)**	**211(100)**	**22(100)**	**261(100)**

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)

Table 3 shows that most of the principals (43%) were in the middle ages of 36 to 40 years age category which was also the modal age of teachers. This finding concurs with the studies by Kariuki (1998) and Mbugua (1998). This has the implication that the schools were under relatively young principals and teachers which according to Chapman (2003) is the most active cohort of personnel in teaching and managing school affairs. The same can be said of PTA chairs for according to the table, majority (68%) were below 51 years of age. Data on the principals' headship experience and size of school was cross tabulated and summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of Principals by Headship Experience and Size of School

School-Size	Headship Experience (in Years)				
	1-5	**6-10**	**11-15**	**21-25**	**Total**
One Stream	7(78)	1(11)	1(10)	-	9(32)
Two Stream	3(30)	5(50)	1(10)	1(10)	10(36)
Three Stream	2(14)	2(40)	-	1(20)	5(18)
Four Stream	1(14)	1(25)	-	2(50)	4(14)
Total	**13**	**9**	**2**	**4**	**28(100)**

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)

The data presented in Table 4 shows that most (79%) of the principals had worked as head teachers for less than 11 years. Of these, majority (73%) were heading schools with less than three streams. The table further indicates that of the total number of principals (4) who had been in headship position for more than 15 years, majority (75%) were in charge of schools with more than two streams. This data gives the impression that bigger schools (i.e. schools with more than two streams) were headed by the more experienced principals. This finding is consistent with the observation that the probability of a secondary school principal heading a large-sized school in Kenya increases with increase in headship experience (Ndichu, 2006)

Results from Hypotheses Testing

Three hypotheses were tested using chi-square. This was accomplished by grouping data on the independent and dependent variables into categories. The data categories were in turn cross tabulated in order to establish whether there was any relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results of testing the hypotheses are discussed below.

Analysis of the Relationship between Size of School and Principals' Discipline Management Approaches

The first null hypothesis stated that there was statistically no significant relationship between size of school and principals' discipline management approaches. The results of analysing the hypothesis are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents (Teachers and PTA Chairs) According to Scores on DMA by Size of School

Size of School	Distribution of respondents by scores				
	18-26	**27-39**	**40-52**	**53-65**	**Total**
One Stream	4(8)	10(16)	34(56)	13(21)	61(26)
Two Streams	2(3)	16(20)	37(46)	25(31)	80(34)
Three Streams	0(0)	12(20)	39(65)	9(15)	60(26)
Four Streams	0(0)	7(22)	10(31)	15(47)	32(14)
Total	**6**	**45**	**120**	**62**	**233(100)**

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)
$\chi^2=26.597$; df =9; p<0.05

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents in each of the four categories of schools scored over 60% of the maximum (65) points. It is noteworthy that the category of schools that had the highest proportion of respondents who scored over 60% of the maximum points was three- streamed schools (80%), followed by four- streamed (78%), two-streamed (77%) and one-streamed (77%) schools. This Indicates that principals' level of inclusiveness increased with increase in size of school. This has the implication that there was a

positive relationship between size of school and the extent to which principals enlisted the support of teachers and parents in the management of students' discipline. The null hypothesis had postulated that school- size and the approaches used by principals to manage discipline were unrelated. However, the computed chi-square statistic shows that the two variables were not only related but the relationship was significant ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected and conclusion made that principals' level of inclusiveness in students' discipline management was dependent on size of school. These results are consistent with studies by McManus (1989) and Muchiri (1998).

It is worthwhile to mention that bigger schools (refer to Table 4) in the study sample were headed by the more experienced principals. Studies by Koehler (1992), and Muchiri (1998) have established that experienced principals are more likely to include other stakeholders in school management compared to their less experienced counterparts. This may perhaps explain why the probability of teachers and parents being involved in students' discipline management increased towards large-sized schools.

The outcome of analyzing the second hypothesis is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Scores on TPI by Size of School

School size	Distribution of Respondents by Scores				
	20-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	Total
One stream	1(2)	17(27)	36(58)	8(13)	62(27)
Two streams	1(1)	12(15)	56(69)	12(15)	81(35)
Three streams	-	14(24)	37(63)	8(14)	59(25)
Four streams	-	6(19)	16(52)	9(29)	31(13)
Total	2	49	145	37	233(100)

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)
$\chi^2 = 12.402$; df = 9; $p > 0.05$

An examination of the data in Table 6 indicates that the highest proportion (84%) of the respondents who scored more than 60 points (i.e 61% of the maximum points) came from two-streamed schools. They were followed by respondents in four streamed (81%), three-streamed (76%) and one-streamed (71%) schools respectively. This implies that level of teachers and parental support for discipline management increased towards large schools. However, the relationship between size of school and teachers and parental support for discipline management was statistically not significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis was, therefore accepted and conclusion made that statistically, size of school and teachers and parental input on students' discipline management were independent.

It needs to be recalled that principals' level of inclusiveness in discipline management (refer to Table 5) increased with increase in size of school. It can, therefore be deduced that teachers and parental involvement in discipline management had a positive effect on their level of support in this dimension of school management.

Analysis of the Relationship between Size of School and Level of Students' Discipline

The results of testing the third hypothesis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents (Teachers) According to Scores on LSD by size of School

School-size	Distribution of respondents by scores				
	26-52	53-78	79-104	105-130	Total
One stream	-	14(26)	35(65)	5(9)	54(25)
Two streams	-	22(31)	42(59)	7(10)	71(34)
Three streams	2(4)	13(23)	37(66)	4(7)	56(27)
Four streams	2(7)	15(50)	10(33)	3(10)	30(14)
Total	4	64	124	19	211(100)

(Figures in parenthesis represent percentages)
$\chi^2 = 23.646$;   df = 9; $p<0.05$

The data displayed in Table 7 reveals that majority (68%) of the respondents scored over 78 points (i.e over 60% of the maximum points). The distribution of respondents who scored above 78 points across the four categories of schools reveals an interesting pattern that is worth noting. For instance, while 74% of respondents in one-streamed schools scored over 78 points, the corresponding proportion of respondents in two-streamed, three-streamed and four-streamed schools was 69%, 73%, and 43% respectively. This implies that level of students' discipline decreased towards large schools. Specifically, a significant ($p<0.05$) negative relationship was established between size of school and level of students' discipline. Consequently, the third null hypothesis was rejected and conclusion made that size of school and level of students' discipline were not independent.

The data in Table 5 and 6 had shown that both the level of principals' inclusiveness and teachers and parental support in regard to discipline management increased towards large-sized schools. It was, therefore expected that level of students' discipline would depict a similar pattern. The contrary was, however the case, which suggests that even if principals' inclusiveness had a positive effect on teachers and parental support for discipline management it did not add value on students' discipline in large schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students' discipline management is an important function in school management as it affects
the ultimate outcomes of school learning. It is in this respect that the approach used by the principal (as the overall manager of the school) to manage discipline is vital. Although there are many attributes of the school that may determine principals' approach to discipline management and thus quality of discipline, this study focused and analysed the relationship between principals' discipline management approaches and size of school. The ultimate aim was to establish whether principals' discipline management approaches had an effect on level of students' discipline.

The study revealed that size of school had a bearing on both the level of principals' inclusiveness and teachers' and parental support for discipline management. Specifically, the likelihood of principals enlisting the support of teachers and parents in discipline management increased towards large schools. Similarly, teachers and parents in large schools were more likely to play a proactive role in discipline management compared to their counterparts in small schools. However, level of students' discipline lowered towards large schools. This implies that although the probability of teachers and parents playing a proactive role in discipline management increased towards large schools due to the inclusive nature of principals in these institutions, it did not generate the expected impact on discipline.

These findings have important implications and lessons on school management with respect to managing students' discipline. One significant observation is that of inclusiveness, which according to the study has a positive effect on teachers and parents willingness to support the school in discipline management. Since principals heading schools with less than three streams were comparatively less inclusive in discipline management, they should be accorded an opportunity by the Ministry of Education to have induction courses

with a view to enhance their capacity to work with and through teachers and parents. This will go a long way in enabling their schools to manage emerging and unfamiliar student behaviours and expectations.

It needs, however to be realized that although a higher level of inclusiveness is likely to increase quality of students' disciplining the contrary was the case in large schools. This has the implication that a different factor might be required to uphold discipline in these schools. A potential strategy would be to solicit support from external experts such as sociologists, counsellors and psychologists (Kiumi, 2006). This may be accomplished through the joint effort of principals and teacher counsellors. This will hopefully generate an additive effect on teachers' and parents' contribution towards discipline management.

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